and republished in 1577. This latter edition was familiar to Shakespeare and greatly used by him. Similarly, the *Hundred Merry Tales,* another Elizabethan classic which Shakespeare read to good purpose, was based in part (as we have seen) on the *Schimpf und Ernst* of Johannes Pauli, a German friar of Jewish birth. Add to this the influence of Fernando de Rojas' *Celestina* (referred to above) and of Leone Ebreo's *Dialogues of Love* (exerted through the medium of Castiglione's famous treatise on "The Courtier," which taught Europe the ideal of the gentleman) and it will be realised that the "Semitic" influence on Elizabethan literature was far from negligible.

A good deal of Shakespeare's knowledge of things Italian—one of the most characteristic features and the most favoured sources of his plays—derives from John Florio, the translator-in-ordinary to Elizabethan England. The latter's great Italian-English dictionary was probably one of the most influential works of the century. Shakespeare without Florio would certainly have been different. The genius would have been there, and the humour, and the language; but the atmosphere of many of the plays would have been strangely unfamiliar. It is remarkable to find, then, that Florio was of Jewish extraction. His father was Michelangelo Florio, preacher to the Italian Protestant congregation in London and biographer of the ill-fated Lady Jane Grey. In his *Apologia* (Chamogasco, 1557) Michelangelo

Florio states: "I was never a Jew nor son of a Jew, but born of a father and mother baptised as papists like yourself; *but if you should say that my progenitors were Hebrews before baptism, this I will not deny.*"[9]

John Florio is best remembered to-day for his translation of the Essays of Michel de Montaigne, which is still classical. The latter was, of course, one of the great figures in sixteenth-century letters. It was he who for